

Green Agenda

*Kosovo's
achievements four
years after the
Sofia Summit*

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Introduction

Kosovo faced pressure to align with the European Green Deal, a comprehensive roadmap established by the European Union (EU) to transform Europe into the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. This plan encompasses sustainable energy, agriculture, circular economy practices, pollution control, and biodiversity protection. Kosovo's adoption of the Green Deal principles is not merely a response to environmental challenges but a step toward socio-economic stability, regional cooperation, and potential EU accession. However, despite notable advancements, Kosovo still grapples with obstacles, including high carbon emissions, heavy reliance on lignite coal, and limited institutional capacity, all of which complicate its journey toward a sustainable, EU-aligned future.

One of Kosovo's foremost challenges is its energy reliance on lignite, a resource-intensive and polluting fossil fuel that contributes to a vast majority of Kosovo's electricity production. While Kosovo has made decarbonization commitments, there is still a need for a structured and enforceable strategy that would allow a transition toward renewables. Without such a plan, Kosovo remains Europe's highest per capita emitter of carbon, which has implications for public health, the environment, and Kosovo's ability to meet EU climate standards. The lack of a clear coal phaseout strategy highlights a broader issue of limited institutional resources and capacity. This institutional gap delays essential climate actions, as regulatory bodies struggle to enforce environmental policies or attract foreign direct investment (FDI) in renewable energy.

Beyond energy, Kosovo's circular economy and waste management efforts also reflect the nation's struggle to achieve sustainability. Kosovo's waste management practices are marked by inefficient landfill use and the absence of recycling systems, causing environmental degradation. While recent legislation seeks to support sustainable production, Kosovo requires further enforcement mechanisms to effectively reduce waste and improve resource efficiency. Pollution control in Kosovo, specifically concerning air, water, and soil, presents additional barriers. The lack of robust regulatory enforcement, outdated infrastructure, and the inefficiency of current waste management systems contribute to persistent pollution challenges that impact public health and agricultural productivity.

This report assesses Kosovo's progress within the Green Deal framework across five key pillars: Climate and Decarbonization, Circular Economy, Pollution Control, Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems, and Biodiversity Protection. Through evaluating Kosovo's efforts and providing targeted recommendations, the project aims to show both the challenges and the opportunities available to help Kosovo realize its vision of a sustainable, EU-integrated future.

Additionally, the report was specifically developed to create an evaluation tool that allows us to annually assess our recommendations, areas of progress, and areas needing improvement following the signing of the Sofia Summit Declaration. Each item in the Declaration has been treated as an indicator in our evaluation, receiving a score based on its implementation level. Moving forward, our advocacy efforts will continue to build on the recommendations highlighted in this report.

While specific laws have been enacted to build the legal and regulatory framework for energy and climate issues, gaps remain in Kosovo's legislation regarding environmental challenges.

The indicators for this assessment were primarily derived from two core documents: the "Guidelines for the Implementation of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans," published by the European Commission, and the "Implementation Guide for the Green Agenda" by the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). These documents provide the foundation for evaluation, detailing guidelines, key performance indicators (KPIs), and implementation strategies to ensure the assessment aligns with the goals and objectives of the Green Agenda.

Assessment and monitoring methodology

This report utilizes both qualitative and quantitative methods. The data presented was primarily gathered through desk research, drawing from European Commission reports, government documents, and other official sources. For the indicators within the five pillars of the Green Agenda, quantitative assessments were made using a Likert scale from 1 to 5. This scale ranges from "no progress" to "fully implemented," providing a quantified evaluation of each indicator.

Below are the specific criteria for each level of the Likert scale in the context of evaluating Kosovo's achievement in Green Agenda implementation:

No Progress (1):

Minimal actions have been taken towards implementing the Green Agenda.

A small number of documents or policies related to the Green Agenda may be in progress, but none have been fully approved or implemented.

Initial discussions or planning for Green Agenda initiatives may have started, but there is no concrete evidence of significant progress.

Limited Progress (2):

At least three approved documents or policies directly related to the Green Agenda have been established. This could include strategies, action plans, or legislative changes.

There are visible signs of implementation, such as pilot projects or initiatives that demonstrate a commitment to the Green Agenda's goals.

Stakeholder engagement and awareness-raising efforts have begun to gain traction.

There is progress (3):

Multiple approved documents and policies have been implemented, impacting various aspects of sustainability and environmental conservation.

There is evidence of widespread adoption of Green Agenda principles across relevant sectors and stakeholders

A majority of the goals and objectives have been addressed and substantial progress has been made.

Significant progress (4):

All goals and objectives outlined in the indicators have been successfully achieved and implemented.

Comprehensive policies, strategies, and initiatives are in place to support sustainability and environmental conservation efforts.

The Green Agenda is fully integrated into relevant governmental and organizational practices, with a demonstrated commitment to long-term sustainability.

Fully implemented (5):

All goals and objectives outlined in the indicators have been successfully achieved and implemented.

Comprehensive policies, strategies, and initiatives are in place to support sustainability and environmental conservation efforts.

The Green Agenda is fully integrated into relevant governmental and organizational practices, with a demonstrated commitment to long-term sustainability

1. Decarbonization: Climate, Energy, and Mobility (Pillar 1)

The first pillar of the Sofia Summit Declaration focuses on environmental sustainability, with a special focus on climate action and decarbonization as essential goals. It encourages nations to reduce carbon emissions by shifting to renewable energy sources like solar and wind, enhancing climate resilience, and protecting biodiversity. By prioritizing green innovation, sustainable development, and resource conservation, the declaration aims to promote economic growth that aligns with environmental goals that will ensure a greener future across Europe and in our case, the Western Balkans.¹

Kosovo's decarbonization efforts are directed toward achieving net zero emissions by 2050, an ambitious goal that will require radical shifts in all areas.² With the support of international frameworks like the Energy Community Treaty, Kosovo will have to focus on transitioning its energy sector from lignite reliance to renewables, aiming to decommission lignite plants by 2050.³

Kosovo has yet to commit full heartedly phasing out coal. For example, the draft National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) lacks clear commitments for coal phaseout and achieving climate neutrality by 2050, which the secretariat highlighted as essential for a consistent energy strategy. Despite some projections of reduced lignite use, it will still be a significant energy source by 2040, especially in district heating, with greenhouse gas emissions remaining high. Plans to refurbish coal plants Kosovo A and B suggest extended reliance on coal, yet there is no clear strategy to incentivize renewable energy or ensure compliance with EU emissions standards.⁴

Additionally, Kosovo has no provisions for a just transition, leaving communities affected by coal phaseout unsupported and without a clear path toward a sustainable energy shift. Strategies include

¹ Sofia Summit Declaration. (2021). <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/50365/sofia-summit-declaration-en.pdf>.

²World Bank Group- Country Climate and Development Report <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099103024082061399/pdf/P1792051b0d01204b18bb910f3f9583d6a3.pdf>

³ Energy Community urges Kosovo* to commit in its NECP to phasing out coal by 2050 - <https://balkangreenenergynews.com/energy-community-urges-kosovo-to-commit-in-its-necp-to-phasing-out-coal-by-2050/>

⁴Energy Strategy of Republic of Kosovo 2022- 2031 - <https://me.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Energy-Strategy-of-the-Republic-of-Kosovo-2022-2031-1-1.pdf>

upscaling wind and solar capacity, expanding battery storage for energy stability, and integrating with European energy networks. In the following document, we will see all the elements of the first pillar evaluated according to the INDEP monitoring methodology.

Legal framework
Administrative Instruction (QRK) No. 16/2013 on Substances that Damage the Ozone Layer and Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases
MESPI administrative instruction no. 09/2023 on the method of air quality monitoring, data collection, criteria and methodology
Administrative Instruction (QRK) No. 19/2013 for Access to Information on Economic Fuel Consumption and CO2 Emission of New Personal Vehicles
Administrative Instruction (QRK) No. 20/2013 for the Implementation of Flexible Mechanisms for Clean Development
Administrative Instruction (QRK) No. 01/2016 for the Mechanism of Transmission of Greenhouse Gas Emissions;
Administrative Instruction (QRK) No. 09/2015 on the Conveyance of Greenhouse Gas Emissions;
Administrative Instruction (QRK) No. 14/2018 for the Deposit of Carbon Dioxide in Suitable Geological Formations;
Amending and Supplementing Administrative Instruction MESP No. 08/2013 for Constructions for which no construction permit is required
Law no. 08/L – 025 on the Protection of Air from Pollution
LAW NO. 08/L-250 ON CLIMATE CHANGE

1.1. Climate and Decarbonization Policies

Climate and Decarbonization Policies remains limited due to persistent challenges in infrastructure, institutional capacity, and dependency on lignite for energy. Although the Law on Climate Change was enacted, it served its purpose by laying a legal foundation for climate action, actual implementation lags. Kosovo has the highest carbon intensity in Europe, largely because of its reliance on aging, lignite-fired power plants that contribute to extensive greenhouse gas emissions. These plants, responsible for over 88% of electricity production, impede swift decarbonization efforts.⁵

Kosovo's institutional readiness to support decarbonization is rated as "nascent," indicating that while frameworks are in place, effective structures for policy execution are underdeveloped. The National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP), critical for setting and achieving emission reduction targets, lacks sufficient funding and operational clarity, delaying impactful climate actions.⁶ Despite commitments to align with the European Union's decarbonization objectives under the Energy Community Treaty, Kosovo's capacity to translate these commitments into tangible actions remains restricted by limited technical and financial resources. Moreover, economic constraints and political challenges compound these issues. Kosovo's GDP per capita is among the lowest in the Western Balkans, and political

⁵ Climate Change Law and energy reliance statistics - <https://climate-laws.org/geographies/kosovo>

⁶Energy Community NECP on Kosovo readiness - https://www.energy-community.org/dam/jcr%3A931a5560-fff2-47b3-a793-85980fcf7029/30EECG_KEEA_NECP.pdf

complexities limit foreign direct investment (FDI), which could aid in advancing renewable energy infrastructure. Although the Kosovo Energy Efficiency Fund aims to support energy-efficient projects, it remains under-resourced, hampering large-scale projects essential for decarbonization.⁷

Regional integration efforts, like linking with the Albanian Power Exchange (ALPEX), are steps in the right direction but face bureaucratic delays that slow energy market reforms. ⁸Kosovo’s slow legislative progress in the energy sector, coupled with resource-intensive lignite dependency and underdeveloped policy enforcement, underscores why progress in climate and decarbonization remains slow in 2024. Comprehensive structural, financial, and regulatory reforms are essential to meet future targets effectively

1.1. Climate and Decarbonization Policies	Status	Grade
Alignment with the EU Climate Law as soon as it is approved – with a clear vision for climate neutrality by 2050	There is progress	3
Setting forward-looking energy and climate targets for 2030 in accordance with the framework of the Energy Community and the EU acquis, as well as the development and implementation of integrated plans for Energy and Climate with clear measures of designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in economies of the Western Balkans by integrating actions climate in all relevant sectoral policies	Limited progress	2
Prepare and implement climate adaptation strategies to increase resilience through climate protection investments and ensure greater integration of climate change adaptation with disaster risk reduction.	No progress	1
Continuing alignment with the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, as well as working towards the introduction of other carbon pricing instruments to promote	No progress	1

⁷ EBRD on Kosovo Energy Efficiency Fund and GDP context - <https://www.ebrd.com/work-with-us/projects/psd/55125.html>

⁸ Energy Community updates on ALPEX and energy market reforms - <https://www.energy-community.org/news/Energy-Community-News/2024/06/14.html>

decarbonization in the region		
Increasing opportunities to deploy nature-based solutions to mitigate and adapt to climate change.	No progress	1
In light of the implementation of the European Climate Pact, the evaluation of prospects for the region to take part in this initiative, or the development of a similar mechanism in the region	Limited progress	2
Reviewing and reevaluating all relevant laws to promote the gradual decarbonization of the energy sector and assure their effective implementation, particularly through the Energy Community;	There is progress	3
Cooperation in the preparation of an assessment of the socio economic impact of decarbonization at the level of individual and regional economies with the aim of a fair transition;	No progress	1
Development and implementation of climate adaptation plans for transport networks of Western Balkan economies and promotion for the preparation and implementation of Sustainable Plans of Urban Movement for urban areas in the Western Balkans	Limited progress	2

While Kosovo has adopted the Law on Climate Change, the National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) remains in draft form, posing a significant barrier to advancing climate initiatives.⁹ The NECP's adoption is essential not only for implementing the law effectively but also for facilitating investments and projects critical to climate mitigation and adaptation. Without this foundational plan, Kosovo's capacity to attract and deploy resources for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing climate resilience remains constrained. The European Union's Kosovo Report for 2024 underscores this

⁹ NATIONAL ENERGY AND CLIMATE PLAN OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO 2025-2030 - https://www.energy-community.org/dam/jcr:e6badfbc-313d-4ebc-a450-416dcdbd5499/20230714_Final%20Version_First%20Draft%20NECP%202025-2030%20of%20Kosovo.pdf

urgency, calling on Kosovo to “immediately adopt the NECP” to ensure alignment with EU climate targets and unlock necessary funding and technical support.¹⁰

1.2. Energy efficiency and renewable energy sources

The Kosovo Energy Efficiency Fund (KEEF) planned over 70 projects, including measures for energy efficiency in 31 social housing facilities across 14 municipalities in Kosovo. These initiatives aimed to reduce energy use in multi-residential buildings in Skenderaj, Malisheve, Drenas, and others. As of 2024, while there’s no direct confirmation of these specific projects’ completion, KEEF continues its energy efficiency efforts. Recently, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) approved a €50 million loan for KEEF to enhance energy efficiency in up to 400 public buildings, covering sectors like healthcare and education. Although this funding highlights KEEF’s ongoing work, details on the exact implementation status of the 2023 social housing initiatives have yet to be publicly confirmed.¹¹

1.2. Energy efficiency and renewable resources	Status	Grade
Prioritizing energy efficiency and improving it in all sectors	Limited progress	2
Supporting private and public building renovation schemes, ensuring adequate funding and full implementation of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (adapted to the Energy Community framework)	There is progress	3
Increasing the share of renewable energy sources and ensuring the necessary investment conditions, in accordance with the acquis and the objective of the EU and the Energy Community.	Important progress	4
Serious efforts to reduce and gradually remove coal subsidies, strictly respecting state aid rules	No progress	1
Participation in the Initiative for coal regions in transition in the Western Balkans.	Important progress	4
Development of programs to address energy poverty and	No progress	1

¹⁰ Kosovo Report 2024 - https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/c790738e-4cf6-4a43-a8a9-43c1b6f01e10_en?filename=Kosovo%20Report%202024.pdf

¹¹ EBRD €50 million loan to KEEF - <https://www.ebrd.com/work-with-us/projects/psd/55125.html>

financing schemes to renovate family homes and ensure basic living standards.		
Supporting investments in renewable energy production and technologies, as well as emissions reduction and climate change adaptation measures in agriculture.	No progress	1

Kosovo recently adopted the Law on Energy Performance in Buildings and has begun taking steps toward its implementation. For instance, the first Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) have been issued for key buildings, including the former Rilindja government building and the GIZ/KfW office in Kosovo.¹² EPCs are essential tools that assess a building’s energy performance, aiming to reduce energy consumption, decrease carbon emissions, and promote sustainable practices in construction and maintenance.

Additionally, the mandatory schemes required under the Law on Energy Efficiency have yet to be enforced. The Energy Efficiency Fund, while active, currently lacks the capacity to implement sufficient schemes targeting the residential sector, limiting the overall impact of energy efficiency efforts across Kosovo.

1.3. Infrastructure

Kosovo advanced its infrastructure development across energy, transportation, and regional cooperation. In energy, Kosovo secured a €33 million loan from the European Investment Bank (EIB) in March to build one of its largest solar power plants, with a capacity of up to 100 MW, aimed at boosting energy security and supporting green energy goals. Additionally, in April, Kosovo launched a \$236.7 million program with the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) to enhance clean energy infrastructure and improve electricity reliability through renewable solutions. In transportation, Kosovo continued projects such as the Pristina-Durrës railway line and the Prizren-Tetovo road, improving regional connectivity and economic integration. Regional cooperation efforts were strengthened in February when the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and Kosovo signed a memorandum of understanding to support infrastructure upgrades and green economic transition, with potential projects amounting to €400 million by 2027. These developments highlight Kosovo’s commitment to sustainable infrastructure and deeper integration with neighboring economies.¹³

1.3 Infrastructure	Status	Grade
Supporting the development of smart infrastructure, the promotion of	Limited progress	2

¹²News on Energy Performance Certificate in buildings in Kosovo - <https://www.arbresh.info/lajmet/4leshohet-certifikata-e-performances-energjetike-per-ndertesën-e-rilindjes-aliu-synojme-pershirjen-e-te-gjitha-ndertesave/>

¹³ EIB loan for solar and MCC program - <https://www.giz.de/en/mediacenter/kosovo-energiewende.html>

fostering innovative technologies and strengthening interregional cooperation, as demonstrated by the Green Lanes/Corridors initiative;		
Implementation of the regional action plan for railway reforms adopted by regional partners in 2020;	Limited progress	2
Identifying transportation routes for commodities via rail and inland waterways, as well as developing a general plan to move traffic from roads to more ecologically friendly modes;	No progress	1
Ensuring the implementation of EU technical standards and digitalization of all modes of transport;	Limited progress	2
Actively supporting the implementation of the regional action plan for transport facilitation, including the transit points connecting the economies of the Western Balkans, targeting resource-efficient transport operations that will contribute to the reduction of CO2 emissions;	Limited progress	2
Implementation of road safety action plan as well as road action plan including road maintenance and adaptability and intelligent transport systems;	No progress	1
Defining and implementing sustainable mobility solutions in regional level, including fuel deployment plans alternative and the construction of	No progress	1

refueling and fuel stations. Increasing regional cooperation in the field of alternative fuel infrastructure development		
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Kosovo has outlined several key projects under the EU's Growth Plan, with a strong focus on enhancing infrastructure through digitalization.¹⁴ A central component is the digitalization of road networks, this is a pillar within the Kosovo Multimodal Transport Strategy 2023.¹⁵ This strategy emphasizes implementing Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) to create a cleaner, safer, and more efficient transportation network. Kosovo aims to optimize traffic management, reduce emissions, improve road safety, and increase overall efficiency. The ITS initiative reflects a broader commitment to modernize transportation, aligning with EU standards and supporting sustainable development goals.

2. Circular Economy (Pillar 2)

Regarding the second pillar of the Green Agenda, Circular Economy. In 2024, Kosovo took decisive steps towards advancing its circular economy initiatives, aligning with the European Union (EU), which remains the Western Balkans (WB) largest trading partner, comprising 70% of regional trade.¹⁶ WB economies, including Kosovo, have historically relied heavily on natural resource extraction, creating long-term sustainability risks as these resources deplete. Recognizing these challenges, Kosovo has prioritized transitioning to a circular economy, aiming to reduce reliance on non-renewable resources and strengthen its environmental and economic resilience.

Kosovo's Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning, and Infrastructure introduced the Circular Economy Roadmap, designed as a foundational framework for guiding sustainable development across all sectors.¹⁷ Building on this, Kosovo approved the Law on Circular Economy in 2024, solidifying a regulatory framework for sustainable production and specifying technical requirements for industries to support resource efficiency and waste reduction. This law establishes guidelines for integrating circular principles within economic activities, thereby fostering a more sustainable approach to production and consumption.

Additionally, Kosovo has introduced incentives for businesses to adopt circular practices, offering tax benefits and grants for those investing in sustainable technologies. These policies aim to encourage

¹⁴ The Growth Plan for the Western Balkans - https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/2023-communication-new-growth-plan-western-balkans_en

¹⁵ MULTIMODAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2030 - <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/MULTIMODAL-TRANSPORT-STRATEGY-2030.pdf>

¹⁶ What are the links between the EU and the Western Balkans? - <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/service/archive/eu-western-balkans-links-1965560#:~:text=The%20EU%20accounts%20for%20the, trading%20partner%20in%20the%20region.>

¹⁷ Circular Economy Platform for Knowledge Exchange in Kosovo - <https://circulareconomy.europa.eu/platform/sites/default/files/2023-05/Circular%20Economy%20Roadmap%20of%20Kosovo.pdf>

innovation in resource efficiency and align Kosovo's practices with broader EU environmental goals¹⁸. The establishment of the Law on Circular Economy not only signals Kosovo's commitment to environmental sustainability but also its dedication to regional cooperation in sustainable development. By instituting a robust regulatory environment and supporting business incentives, Kosovo is positioning itself to address resource dependency issues, promoting a sustainable economic model that aligns with EU standards.

Legal Framework
Waste Law
Administrative Instruction (QRK) No. 19/2013 for Access to Information on Economic Fuel Consumption and CO2 Emission of New Personal Vehicles
Administrative Instruction (QRK) No. 20/2013 for the Implementation of Flexible Mechanisms for Clean Development
Administrative Instruction (QRK) No. 01/2016 for the Mechanism of Transmission of Greenhouse Gas Emissions
Administrative Instruction (QRK) No. 09/2015 on the Conveyance of Greenhouse Gas Emissions

2.1. Sustainable production and waste management

Sustainable production and waste management continues to pose problems and challenges for Kosovo even in 2024, particularly concerning coal ash deposits and landfills. The Kosovo Energy Corporation (KEK) has been depositing coal ash into the Mirash open-pit mine, creating a substantial ash dump site. In March 2024, the European Investment Bank (EIB) approved a €33 million loan to KEK for constructing a 120 MW solar power plant on this former coal ash dump, aiming to repurpose the site for renewable energy production.¹⁹ Despite these initiatives, the environmental impact of the coal ash deposit lake and the Obiliq Mirash landfill remains significant. The landfill, spanning seven hectares, serves as the primary waste disposal site for multiple municipalities, including Prishtina, Drenas, Lipjan, Podujeva, Graçanica, Obiliq, and Fushë-Kosova. It is considered an environmental hazard, with concerns about pollution spreading to underground water sources.²⁰ The Assembly of Kosovo passed the Waste Law to align with the EU Waste Framework Directive in August 2022. However, the implementation of this law has been slow, and significant environmental challenges persist. While projects like the solar power plant on the former ash dump indicate progress, comprehensive solutions to address the environmental impacts of coal ash deposits and landfills are still needed.

2.1. Sustainable production	Status	Grade
Integration of the Western Balkans in supply chains EU industry by:	Limited Progress	2

¹⁸ EBRD - <https://ebrd.com/news/2024/ebrd-supports-circular-economy-initiatives-in-kosovo.html>

¹⁹ European Investment Bank. https://www.gem.wiki/Kosovo_A_power_station

²⁰Telegrafi - <https://telegrafi.com/en/garbage-dump%2C-environmental-disaster-at-the-doorstep/>

<p>o Undertaking decisive actions for the improvement of sustainability of the primary production of raw materials;</p> <p>o Implementing an industrial ecosystem approach to achieve a sustainable environmental and balanced economic improvement throughout the region, especially for the main sustainable industrial ecosystems such as renewable energy, digital, mobility; and resource-intensive industrial sectors such as tourism, textiles, transport, automobiles and energy-intensive industries;</p>		
<p>Development of a circular economy strategy looking at the entire life cycle of products, waste prevention, modern waste management and recycling, reuse, repair and reproduction</p>	<p>There is progress</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Drafting and implementation of consumer-oriented initiatives to increase citizens' awareness of waste, separate collection and sustainable consumption;</p>	<p>No progress</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>Make further progress in building and maintaining waste management infrastructure for cities and regions</p>	<p>There is progress</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Concluding and implementing a regional agreement on the prevention of plastic pollution, including specifically addressing the priority issue of</p>	<p>No progress</p>	<p>1</p>

marine litter;		
Further implementation of the Smart Specialization Strategy, the locality-oriented and innovation-led transformation agenda for sustainability.	No progress	1

3. Depolluting Air, Water, and Soil (Pillar 3)

The third pillar will always be a problem for Kosovo. The country continues to face significant environmental challenges due to inefficient energy use and a heavy reliance on coal. Major pollution sources include thermal power plants, industrial facilities burning fossil fuels, vehicular emissions, residential heating systems, and inadequate waste disposal practices, with issues intensifying during winter months.²¹ Efforts to mitigate these concerns have shown progress. The Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency (KEPA) has enhanced air quality monitoring systems, providing real-time data to inform policy decisions. Additionally, there has been an increase in small-scale renewable energy projects, with private entities investing in solar and wind installations, encouraged by government incentives and support. For instance, in February 2024, the Ministry of Economy announced plans to auction 950 MW of renewable energy capacity over the next two years, including 150 MW of wind energy to be auctioned within the year.²² ²³ Waste management capacities have also improved through new recycling programs and the modernization of existing waste treatment facilities.²⁴ Despite these advancements, comprehensive and coordinated efforts from both the government and private sector are essential to effectively address pressing ecological concerns. A concerted focus on transitioning to renewable energy sources, implementing stricter emissions regulations, and enhancing public awareness about environmental issues is crucial for paving the way toward a more sustainable and environmentally friendly future in Kosovo.²⁵

Legal Framework
Law on the Protection of Air
Waste Law
Administrative Instruction (QRK) No. 19/2013 for Access to Information on

²¹KfW Entwicklungsbank - <https://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/Partner-countries/Europe/Project-information-Kosovo-Solar-farm/>

²²Renewable Energy Support Kosovo. <https://reskosovo.rks-gov.net/auction/>

²³ Kosovo to auction 950 MW of renewables, 170 MW of battery storage – pv magazine International <https://www.pv-magazine.com/2024/02/07/kosovo-to-auction-950-mw-of-renewables-170-mw-of-battery-storage/>

²⁴KfW Entwicklungsbank <https://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/Partner-countries/Europe/Project-information-Kosovo-Solar-farm/>

²⁵KfW Entwicklungsbank. <https://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/Partner-countries/Europe/Project-information-Kosovo-Solar-farm/>

Economic Fuel Consumption and CO2 Emission of New Personal Vehicles
Administrative Instruction (QRK) No. 20/2013 for the Implementation of Flexible Mechanisms for Clean Development
Administrative Instruction (QRK) No. 01/2016 for the Mechanism of Transmission of Greenhouse Gas Emissions;
Administrative Instruction (QRK) No. 09/2015 on the Conveyance of Greenhouse Gas Emissions;
Administrative Instruction (QRK) No. 16/2013 on Substances that Damage the Ozone Layer and Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases
MESPI administrative instruction no. 09/2023 on the method of air quality monitoring, data collection, criteria and methodology

3.1. Ratification of Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and its protocols

Ratification of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and its protocols	Status	Grade
Finalization of the ratification process of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution in each of the Western Balkan economies	No progress	1
Preparation and signing of regional agreements on transboundary air and water pollution	No progress	1

3.2. Air pollution and water and soil management

Environmental challenges still pose a major risk for Kosovo in 2024, particularly concerning air pollution and the management of water and soil resources. Despite legislative efforts, such as the enactment of the Law on the Protection of Air in June 2022, comprehensive corrective actions to mitigate pollution remain limited. The Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency (KEPA) reported that approximately 18% of the days in 2023 experienced poor to hazardous air quality, underscoring the persistent nature of this issue.²⁶

The Municipality of Prishtina has made some progress by opening the Local Action Plan for Air Quality for public feedback from September to October 2023. However, as of 2024, the implementation of

²⁶ European Environment Agency. <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/europes-air-quality-status-2024>

targeted measures to improve air quality is still in its nascent stages. The Green Agenda's progress remains limited, with the Air Quality Strategy (2013–2022) yet to be renewed, leaving a strategic gap in addressing air pollution. Additionally, the Action Plan (2021–2023) for Integrated Waste Management is due for assessment and renewal to ensure effective waste management practices. The European Commission's 2023 Progress Report on Kosovo highlights advancements in organic waste management, with several municipalities implementing pilot measures for separate waste collection and organic waste reduction. However, the report also notes that the existing water strategy (2017–2036) lacks alignment with EU standards and suffers from inadequate monitoring systems.²⁷

The persistent lack of environmental protection is attributed to several factors, including a lack of focus on the imminent threats posed by climate change, insufficient commitment to implementing environmental policies, limited human and financial resources dedicated to environmental initiatives, rapid, unchecked economic development leading to environmental degradation, failure to enforce environmental protection laws and criteria, and weak adherence to the rule of law and prevalent corruption. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to implement and enforce environmental policies effectively. Enhanced monitoring systems, increased public awareness, and stronger political will are essential to pave the way for a more sustainable and environmentally friendly future in Kosovo.²⁸

Air pollution and water and soil management	Status	Grade
Developing and implementing Air Quality Strategies and increasing the use of best available techniques in accordance with the Industrial Emissions Directive;	Limited Progress	2
Creation of adequate air quality monitoring system, by including the accreditation of air quality monitoring networks;	Important Progress	4
Implementation of the relevant EU acquis related to water (EU	Limited Progress	2

²⁷ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report - Kosovo. <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/RKS>

²⁸ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report - Kosovo. <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/RKS>

Water Framework Directive, Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive and Nitrates Directive);		
Modernizing water monitoring infrastructure and achieving good status for all water bodies	Limited Progress	2
Construction of the necessary infrastructure for wastewater treatment	There is progress	3

4. Building Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems (Pillar 4)

It is of note that Kosovo strengthened its sustainable agriculture and food systems, aligning with the fourth pillar of the European Green Deal. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Development advanced the National Organic Action Plan (2023–2026) to increase organic farming and enhance food security, addressing environmental and economic resilience.²⁹ Additionally, Forest Camp 2024, supported by the EU and Sweden, emphasized sustainable forest management to foster rural development.³⁰ The World Bank approved a loan in March to support Kosovo’s fiscal and environmental policies, indirectly benefiting green agricultural growth.³¹ Amid global food price adjustments, Kosovo saw decreased food inflation, easing affordability pressures.³² These measures highlight Kosovo’s commitment to the European Green Deal, focusing on food security and sustainable rural development.

Legal framework
Plant protection products law
Food Law
Law on Organic Agriculture
Law on agriculture and rural development
Law on biocidal products
Law on general product safety

²⁹ Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Development Kosovo, 2024 - <https://mbpzhr-ks.net/en/reports-and-publications>

³⁰ UN Kosovo, 2024 - <https://kosovoteam.un.org/en/281680-forest-camp-2024-kicks-%C2%A0novobrdonovob%C3%ABrd%C3%AB%C2%A0-eu-and-sweden-support-foster-sustainable-forest>

³¹ World Bank, 2024 - <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2024/03/18/world-bank-supports-fiscal-policy-investment-climate-and-green-growth-reforms-in-kosovo>

³² World Bank Food Security Update, 2024 - <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/agriculture/brief/food-security-update>

Despite 54.23% of Kosovo's land being agricultural, the sector struggles with productivity, hindered by issues like farmland conversion and unfair distribution of subsidies. Implementation of the National Strategy for agriculture remains delayed, affecting sector progress.³³

According to INDEP, Kosovo should conduct regular inspections and market assessments, involving additional stakeholders like civil society for better monitoring.³⁴ Feasibility studies are also needed to identify crops suited to local conditions, as current subsidies sometimes support unprofitable choices. These findings should guide future subsidy programs toward market-appropriate crops.

4.1. Alignment with European legislation and standards for sanitary and organic agriculture

Small steps have been taken by Kosovo to align its agricultural sector with European Union (EU) standards in sanitary and organic agriculture, reflecting priorities under the fourth pillar of the European Green Deal. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Development (MAFRD) progressed with the National Organic Action Plan (2023–2026), focusing on harmonizing national legislation with EU Regulation No. 2018/848 on organic production and labeling to promote compliance with EU norms.³⁵ MAFRD also began transposing EU sanitary standards into Kosovo's laws, emphasizing improvements in food safety and public health. The European Commission's 2024 Kosovo Report acknowledged this progress but highlighted that additional steps are necessary to effectively implement these standards.³⁶ The EU, through the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), provided technical and financial support aimed at building capacity among local farmers and agribusinesses. This assistance is designed to enhance the competitiveness of Kosovo's agricultural sector within European markets while promoting sustainable practices.

5. Protecting Biodiversity and Ecosystems (Pillar 5)

Kosovo made progress in protecting biodiversity and ecosystems, supporting the fifth pillar of the European Green Deal. The Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning, and Infrastructure began updating Kosovo's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) for 2025–2030, aligning it with the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 to emphasize habitat restoration, species protection, and sustainable land use.³⁷ To address previous gaps in biodiversity data, the Ministry launched a biodiversity monitoring program, including systematic inventories and the development of a centralized database for plant and animal species.³⁸

³³ Bujqësia në fokus: Roli, impakti dhe keqpërdorimet e fondeve mbështetëse - <https://indep.info/bujqesia-ne-fokus/>

³⁴ Bujqësia në fokus: Roli, impakti dhe keqpërdorimet e fondeve mbështetëse - <https://indep.info/bujqesia-ne-fokus/>

³⁵ SEERural, 2024 - <https://seerural.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/9.-Kosovo-NOAP-2023-2026.pdf>

³⁶ European Court of Auditors, 2024 - https://www.eca.europa.eu/ECAPublications/SR-2024-19/SR-2024-19_EN.pdf

³⁷ Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning, and Infrastructure, 2024 - https://www.mesp-ks.net/NBSAP_2025-2030

³⁸ European Commission, 2024 - https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/kosovo-report-2024_en

The 2021 Forestry Strategy also saw continued implementation, with a focus on improving and protecting forest resources.³⁹ In support of sustainable forestry, the EU and Sweden backed Forest Camp 2024, a program aimed at sustainable forest management and rural development.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the Spatial Plan for Bjeshkët e Nemuna National Park was revised, enhancing conservation strategies and promoting eco-tourism as a sustainable approach to park management.⁴¹ Still, Kosovo faces challenges in securing sufficient funding and building institutional capacity to fully execute its biodiversity commitments

Legal Framework
Plant Protection Law
Law on forests
Law on hunting
Law on agriculture and rural development
Law on biocidal products
Law on environmental protection
Law on environmental impact assessment

Recommendations

➤ Accelerate Renewable Energy Adoption

The Ministry of Economy, in partnership with the Energy Regulatory Office (ERO), should lead investments in wind, solar, and small-scale hydropower projects to reduce reliance on coal. Setting renewable energy targets by 2030 will require policy development by the Ministry.

➤ Enhance Energy Efficiency in Buildings

The Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning, and Infrastructure should coordinate policies to retrofit public and private buildings with energy-efficient features. Local municipalities would need to collaborate on implementing building codes and incentives.

➤ Promote Sustainable Urban Mobility

The Ministry of Infrastructure, in collaboration with municipalities and the Kosovo Energy Corporation, should develop and promote EV infrastructure. Municipal governments can encourage public transportation use by offering subsidies and improving service networks.

➤ Improve Waste Management Systems

³⁹ Kosovo Forestry Agency, 2024 - <https://kosovoforestryagency.org/forestry-strategy-2021>

⁴⁰ United Nations Kosovo Team, 2024 - <https://kosovoteam.un.org/en/282000-forest-camp-2024-successfully-concludes-step-forward-advancing-sustainable-and-multipurpose>

⁴¹ Bjeshkët e Nemuna National Park Authority, 2024 - <https://www.bjeshket-nemuna-park.com/spatial-plan-update-2024>

The Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning, and Infrastructure should enforce regulations for waste separation and recycling, with support from local municipalities responsible for waste collection. Public education campaigns could be run by the Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency (KEPA).

- Encourage Sustainable Production

The Ministry of Industry, Entrepreneurship, and Trade, in partnership with the Ministry of Finance, should offer incentives for sustainable production, such as tax breaks for companies adopting recycling and waste-reduction measures.

- Develop Resource Efficiency Programs

KEPA and the Ministry of Economy should collaborate with industry stakeholders to launch programs reducing material use and promoting sustainable practices, especially in high-impact sectors like construction and manufacturing.

- Expand Protected Areas

The Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning, and Infrastructure, together with KEPA, should designate new protected areas, particularly in biodiversity hotspots. Management of these areas could involve partnerships with local municipalities and environmental NGOs.

- Promote Reforestation and Afforestation

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Development, alongside KEPA, should lead reforestation initiatives in degraded areas and manage existing forests to enhance carbon capture and biodiversity.

- Enhance Conservation Efforts

KEPA, working with NGOs, should monitor and protect ecosystems, particularly those with endemic species. The Ministry of Environment should provide oversight and allocate funds for ecosystem restoration projects.

- Strengthen Air Quality Monitoring and Regulation

KEPA, with oversight from the Ministry of Environment, should enforce emissions standards for industries, vehicles, and households. The Ministry of Health could be involved in monitoring health impacts and advising on air quality policies.

- Address Water Pollution from Industrial and Urban Sources

The Ministry of Environment, in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry, Entrepreneurship, and Trade, should improve wastewater treatment and regulate industrial effluents. Municipalities should manage urban wastewater infrastructure.

- Remediate Contaminated Soils

The Ministry of Agriculture and KEPA should identify contaminated sites, especially from mining or industrial activities, and implement soil remediation projects. Local authorities would need to be involved in areas heavily affected by these activities.

- Support Organic and Sustainable Farming Practices

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Development should offer subsidies and technical support to farmers implementing organic and sustainable farming practices, promoting healthier soils and reduced pesticide use.

➤ Encourage Agroforestry and Crop Diversification

The Ministry of Agriculture, with support from agricultural research institutes, should promote agroforestry and crop diversification, offering training and support to rural communities to improve climate resilience and biodiversity.

➤ Develop Local Food Supply Chains

The Ministry of Trade and Industry, in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, should foster local food networks to support rural economies and reduce the environmental impact of long supply chains. Municipal governments could help create cooperative platforms and local marketplaces.

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